521 which do not shock others at all. (1)

831

195

1. These comments are applicable also to peoples in other parts of the world.

[554] The general rule of decorum among the Nkundó permits the use of such terms only among equals. Their use when speaking to inferiors is tolerated but not approved of. The use of obscenities when speaking to any strangers meets with definite disapproval. Among persons of different sexes the prohibition is particularly strict.

Nevertheless, the use of these expressions is judged less severely if they are uttered in a moment of anger or as a reprimand, even in the presence of a member of the opposite sex.

Exclamations of anger, vexation, and sorrow are often nothing but obscenities (2). No one is shocked by them in such situations.

2. See "Les Coutumes Funéraires" [Funeral Customs], No. 1, to be published in Anthropos.

Some elderly or more modest persons do not make use of them, however; if the habit of using a particular expression is thoroughly ingrained, they may make a slight change in its pronounciation (as is common for some of our "swear words").

195 To circumvent the difficulties caused by the need to use cer-
93 tain words frequently, [59] euphemisms are coined to take their
514 place. Thus the Nkundó say: ñtswá bokako w'ákusa, "I am going
52 behind the house," to indicate that they are going to urinate, and
516 njótsw' ésendó, "I am going for small pieces of firewood," or njótsw' óténa lokásá, "I am going to pick a leaf," meaning that they are going to the toilet. On the way they say: ñjeta felé, "I am leaving the path" or "I am going to the forest." A husband is permitted to use accurate terminology when speaking to his wife, but it is considered very improper for her to do so in speaking to him.

514 When someone is satisfying a natural need, others keep a
516 distance away from him; they will not even speak to him. Moreover, the person would not reply even if he were called. A woman will not

514 516 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

514 516 518 831 Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means, either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc. According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

518 894 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of [559] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Bonwa in front of a Bootô (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

518 684 894 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

§92 husband will change to revulsion, and she will leave him to be with her charmer.

Part 3

The Search for a Wife

When a young man old enough to marry believes he has the
584 means to do so, he goes out to seek a wife. Naturally, he knows a number of girls, and as a rule he has no trouble finding one who suits him. The courtship is quite simple. As everywhere there are meet-
[951] ings, visits, chats, and jokes; but there is no romanticism or sentimentality, for they are absolutely unknown to these peoples. Since they are in a hurry [103] to reach the objective of their relationship, namely conjugal life, -- and their progress toward this goal is facilitated by usages and customs -- there remains little time for poetry.

There is no specific term for courtship itself. The Nkundó simply speak of "talking with a woman," sooja bǒmoto, "looking for a woman," asa bǒmoto. The girl who is its object is referred to as bombóyó (or boombé among the Injolo).

First, the young man addresses his proposals to the girl: "ndanga tshokoló (tshokumbólo) la wěnǐ", "I want to take you for wife." She shows her agreement by saying, "tshokanga wě ngʼóló, "I love you also," or more frequently, "olaká ǒ wě, "as you wish," yě ǒ lisé, "it's up to you," or something of this sort. (1)

[95]
[578]

1. Note that for the Nkundó these expressions have quite a different significance than would appear from the words. They express a real agreement and an explicit and personal consent. In fact it is considered improper for a woman to use a more direct expression.

584 The lovers exchange gifts. The girl gives food which her
95 mother has provided, or which she has been able to procure herself.

584 element of the engagement is not the payment of the ibulé but the woman's act of leaving her family and joining the man to whom she is engaged. (1) [117]

1. I am deeply grateful to the attorney general, Mr. A. Sohier, for having drawn my attention to a comparison of these practices with the law and practice of other peoples of the Congo and having made me investigate the legal aspect of this question.

5. The fiancée's arrival at her husband's home

As I have said, the fiancée is welcomed by her husband's clan and enthusiastically acclaimed by the population in general.

According to most cases, her husband-to-be receives her and takes her to his home or to that of his parents. The latter await her arrival, having gathered together their daughters, sisters, and various relatives and associates. The fiancé introduces the woman of his choice to them. She is greeted in the usual fashion: "w'ôngɔ ɔ̂kɔ́ta; ɔ̂yɛ́; ɔ̂ɔ́ttswa, etc.," depending on the extent of their previous intimacy.

Then gifts are given to the fiancée. First the parents-in-law give her a welcoming gift, called bosambelo, literally translated as "handclasp." It usually consists of a ring or a knife. Then they give her their hands. (1) Following them, all relatives and associates

• [576] 1. The Nkundo clasp hands as a sign of friendship. The gesture is a sort of greeting. They don't press the hand as do Europeans but place the hands lightly over each other and then withdraw them, rubbing gently.

must do the same. The men usually give a ring and the women a knife. These objects are considered as part of the bride price, and the

The dispensation is given by the ndonga acting with the family council, which often yields before the fact, particularly if the second reason is involved. (1)

1. "To give a dispensation" is translated as kilola. A marriage contracted with a legitimate dispensation or one accorded because of the pressure of the accomplished fact is called kilôkilôlê, or "an affinity which is not maintained according to the regulations."

[67] 2. Contrary to European law, which recognizes only a direct affinity between husband and his wife's family, Nkundô law also recognizes an indirect affinity, so that a person is affinally related even to the spouses of his wife's relatives. That is, each person is affinally related, not only to his spouse's kin, but also to their relatives by marriage. Thus, in the example below, Njoli and Bafta are true relatives by marriage, though indirect ones. (2)

2. The Nkundô do not make a terminological distinction between the two types of affinity. We are using the terms "direct" and "indirect" for the sake of convenience and clarity.

There is an important difference between the two types of affinity: direct affinity is a much greater obstacle to marriage than indirect affinity, and exceptions are made only rarely and only for certain degrees of relationship.

3) A distinction must be made between "superior" and "inferior" relatives, that is, between those who have [253] precedence

and those who owe submission and respect. The "superior" relatives are the ascendants, uncles, aunts, etc., in short, all those bearing the title of "father" or "mother," as well as elder brothers (elder sisters, elder cousins, etc.), who are batómbílé (sing. botómbílé). The "inferiors" are the descendants, those who are called "children" (bǐna): sons and daughters, grandsons, nephews, nieces, younger brothers or sisters, and those who are classed with them and called baktíné (sing. boktíné).

4) Polygamy and the inheritance of widows introduce another element. We will see that although persons of certain degrees of affinity may not marry, the prohibition is lifted to permit the inheritance of widows.

5) Our term "relatives by marriage" the Nkundó term and bakílé are not synonymous, even with respect to direct affinity. When we use the term "relatives by marriage" here, we are speaking in Nkundó terms. They do not consider certain persons whom we would include in that category as "relations by marriage." Such persons are included in the group which as a whole is designated as likílé or bakílé, but when properly and accurately referred to they are called bǒme, "husband," or wíli, "wife," because they may marry each other and therefore affinity, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to them. In other words, for the Nkundó, affinity is the relationship of a person with (only) those of his spouse's relatives whom he is forbidden to marry. It is well to bear in mind the double meaning of this term.

2. The rules

1. Direct Affinity

A. Marriages are prohibited in the direct line. Nevertheless, in accordance with consideration number 4, a son or grandson may inherit or marry the widows of his father or grandfather, but not the reverse. [254]

gravity of the situation. In general, the wife's parents judge impartially, because they value the stability of the marriage. If the husband feels that he has been wronged, he can always appeal to the ndonga, but ordinarily there is no need to do so and the matter is settled in a friendly fashion and in private. If the woman is found to be in the wrong, her parents scold her and take her to task. Provided with some gift (two or three bakonga, for example), they return her to her husband, advising her to behave in a more suitable fashion in the future. Should she resist, her parents will not hesitate to use threats and curses, and these seldom fail to have their effect. Nowadays women have become more emancipated, and it does sometimes happen that such a woman will scorn her parents' decision, especially if she has a lover somewhere beyond the reach of family justice. If it is the husband who is in the wrong, his wife will not go back with him until he has begged her to do so by paying a few copper rings or other valuables, the amount depending on the seriousness of the situation. This act on the husband's part is expressed by the verb bɔ́ndá [271] and the noun bɔ́ndɔ, terms which do not apply specifically to this case only but are used whenever pardon is asked for a serious offense. This payment is not a fine or indemnity; it is more closely equivalent to the apologies and retractions customary among Europeans.

At the present time some women go back to their families for very slight reasons. Freedom and a greater ease of communication, together with a desire for emancipation, which is no longer held back by the rein of ancestral sanctions, are the cause for this state of affairs. They are still held back somewhat by the risk of a rupture of the marriage, a possibility which they generally would rather not see realized, especially if the bride price is quite large.

In the past, if a woman was married a short distance away from her parents, she could always run away to them when there were domestic disputes. Even if the route led through other villages, it was always possible to take a direct path through the forest, for such paths exist everywhere; they go around the villages in between so that, in case of conflict or danger of examination, a traveler can go his way without being seen. When a woman was married into a

593[a] 606 598 We should add that in some households, difficulties arise rather easily during the visits of parents or parents-in-law, because of the sensibilities, incompatibility of character, or discontent of one party who may consider the other guilty of discourtesy, lack of delicacy, disrespect, or stinginess toward the visiting parents. The same is true for the rearing of children. [273]

4. Punishments

597[a] 578 Nkundó law permits a husband to inflict corporeal punishment (bikɔ̂ɔjwɛ̂, sing. ekɔ̂ɔjwɛ̂) on his wife, its nature varying with the seriousness of the case. Obviously these sanctions, expressly permitted by law, cannot give rise to claims on the woman's part (574) or result in the obligation to pay a bɔ̂ɔnda. [Editor's note: Unless, of course, the husband -- acting in excess of his rights -- is more violent than the occasion warrants for under such conditions, the wife, supported by her family, attacks the husband, who is then [581] forced to acknowledge the harm he has done and make reparation by means of a bɔ̂ɔnda.] If she is hurt she may claim a supplementary payment called lɔ́mbɔ (from the verb lɔ́mbɛ) or "bandage" (for the wound): it consists of 5 rings or more, depending on the situation. [606] The loss or breaking of a tooth is considered a serious injury. For this is a real injury to the woman and, in the case of front teeth, to her beauty. (1) Of course, as explained above, the wife will first have

[604] 1. Because they are filed, the incisors are much less resistant than normal teeth. Teeth filing is practiced for reasons of beauty.

run home, and it is there that the dispute is examined.

593[b] 578 607 For the sake of a clearer understanding, let us go into a few details concerning the penal stipulations of Nkundó law in relation to the life of a married couple.

Usually, in a simple domestic quarrel, the couple does no more than tell each other some home truths, seasoning their speeches

577 with a few vulgarities. If the woman goes beyond that, her husband
593' gives her a good slap, but he cannot allow himself to exercise his
689 muscles further upon her.

If a woman's tongue is too voluble and she permits herself to deliver gross insults without a suitable reason, her lack of respect is considered punishable. It is not considered proper (576) to right this wrong by means of blows, however, although in practice impetuous young men do not always restrain themselves. The sanction preached by tribal wisdom is the man's abstention from food prepared by the guilty wife, and his refusal to perform the conjugal act. A Nkundó woman is very sensitive to such measures. If she is really recognized to be in the wrong and peace is not promptly re-established, the wife's
[52] family will beg the husband to calm down and offer him a bo<u>ndo</u>, which may be as great as the value of a dog.

593' In the course of a quarrel a Nkundó woman may resort to a
578 roundabout way of expressing her feelings: instead of cursing her husband directly she will address herself to a domestic animal which passes in front of her. The man is naturally not deceived, and the effect is identical.

What we have said applies to ordinary insults such as to wish a person's death, which may be expressed in the following ways: <u>owé</u> "drop dead," <u>nkɔ́ɔ́ ékokumbé</u>, "may a leopard get you"; <u>njwé ékokumé</u>, "may a snake bite you"; <u>ótówé ó</u>? "aren't you dying?"; <u>okoma</u>, "why don't you get sick"; <u>bákɔ́ndimé nɔ́ɔ́ ngɔ́lo</u>, "may you be carried to the cemetery"; <u>bákokumé</u>, "may you be buried." Invectives based *on physical defects or designed to humiliate a man fall in the same* category. For instance a woman may call her husband <u>bololí</u> or <u>etulu</u>, "a nobody," or <u>imomolo</u>, "idiot," or <u>inyanyama</u>, "beast," etc.

If, on the other hand, the woman in her volubility attacks her husband's parents, the matter becomes more serious. The Nkundó react very badly to verbal excesses directed toward them. Whether he is subject to teasing on their account or to insults such as "eat your mother (or father)," or to obscenities in relation to them, or whether the speaker "dishonors" deceased parents in evoking their memory, (1)

[195] 1. For the sake of documentation on Nkundó psychology and morals, here is the Latin text

49 movement and therefore serves as the Nkundó prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the nkonga) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an ad hoc payment, that is, a bofondo of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household.

2) Bokongonyi, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [317] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the otika and were never applied alone.

3) Exposure to the bites of elongated ants. In the region under discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to bafombe (Dorylus), or even to the venomous benikokotswe. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Mongo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) The pouring of water containing pepper into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) Exposure of the sex organs to fire. A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

6) Nudity. The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

Any of the types of evidence listed above is sufficient to legitimize the application of one or another of these penalties. Nevertheless, the husband is required first to notify the elder members of his family and the ndonga, who do not permit him to act unless the misdeeds have occurred repeatedly. The readiness to accord the husband permission depends on the temperament of the interested parties and on a great many circumstances, the most important of which is the respective social prominence of the parties involved.

The need to ask permission of the "fathers" and the ndonga, which we have already encountered in reference to other situations (above, Article III, 4), does not weaken the husband's rights [318], but it limits their use. It is not a legal obligation but one that is imposed for family reasons, which are as follows:

1) The respect due to the "fathers" in this as in all important matters;

2) The respect due to the ndonga, who in marital matters is the husband's superior and whose intervention must be called upon in any serious situation;

3) The repercussions of any inconsiderate or rash action on the entire family (enmities, wars, etc.).

If forbearance and patience are fruitless, no one can blame the husband any longer. And when the woman's family compares the censurable conduct of their daughter with the generosity of their son-in-law, they will naturally be inclined to find that he is in the right and so usually will not intervene against him.

Note also that the Nkundó invoke the need to maintain their honor as justification for the obligation to notify the authorities. They must be able to inform the unfaithful woman's clan and thus safeguard their good reputation as defenders of order and public peace.

A woman whose husband loved her very much was subjected to the etika only. He would reprimand her and strike her, and would try to correct her behavior by means of gentleness and leniency.

As we will see suo loco, a husband who is exasperated by the incorrigible infidelity of a wife whose performance of other wifely

764 584 All the payments must pass through the ndonga. He is the one who transmits the desired objects from one group to the other. He intervenes in the disputes that arise in order to settle them and re-establish peace. He explains the various points of view, elucidates some consideration whose significance the other group does not seem to fully comprehend, etc.

As has already been said many times, there can be several ndonga. Legally all of them can intervene personally or through their officially recognized representatives. Thus, several months ago (1933) at Bonjoku, Baémbe, wife of Ikomo of Besombó, was present at a nkunji discussion. No one paid any attention to her. At one point she threw herself into the discussion by reprimanding the chief ndonga and the families involved, asking them on what basis they were excluding her from this affair. Did not her husband have the right to intervene? Was he not also a ndonga? Since he had gone fishing in the Jwalé, it was impossible for him to come. She could therefore legitimately substitute for him. Then why was [572] she being left out? She was quickly pacified, and the persons involved admitted that she was right and apologized for their forgetfulness and negligence.

764 584 431 The wives of the deceased's clan place the gifts of food at the ndonga's feet. The bokóné (the youngest) of the clan goes and explains to him what they are and for whom [434] the gifts are intended. (1) One portion goes to the bakalé of the deceased, that

1. In the Nkundó hierarchy it is always the youngest who is charged with the execution of all such small tasks, at the behest of the head of the family.

is, the baf̀ifa of the husband's clan; another portion goes to the bafome (the husbands), that is, to the widower and his family; a third part is set aside for kinswomen of the deceased who have come from villages into which they are married in order to be present at the funeral.

764 The clan of the deceased first asks the other clan "for news" (bóis mongo). The latter reply that one of their members had

§45 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
[178] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
§45 §33 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Ámbá tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ámbá, do not weep: (1) Bokótu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóy'é'Ambá toflikáká tonyongáká, tolóká bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ámbá'a Bokótu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokótu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' emengo yelí yeye, "Bokótu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokótu'a Mbóyó lá'gógóng lá'gógndo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokótu'a Mbóyó, lóóta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingoi
§45 262 (or bilingondo or bankánkíndá), the mpambí antelope, and the ólí yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

§45 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[181] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

§45 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
516 be double: w'ótsé w'ótsé, the reply em'ótsé em'ótsé; oóyá, oóyá, the reply bóka bóka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently

576
845 from the others. They thus rank with the great notables of the past. [sic]

845 When the children grow up and become self-sufficient, all
554 the special regulations lose their force and they become like everybody else. Nothing distinguishes them from the rest in marriage, death, etc. No preference is shown for or against them. But their descendants will again produce twins.

845 Thus the Nkundó consider twins as extraordinary children, but they do not carry this view to extremes. They are pleased to receive two children at a time, although they believe that under such circumstances the pregnancy and delivery are more dangerous for the mother. That is why she is called bɔyɛngwɛ́ since, despite the seriousness of the situation, she did not die. This epithet is also applied to the father and to the twins, probably for the same reason as well as because of their immunity with respect to prohibitions. If the twins are of different sexes, however, the mother is not as likely to be called bɔyɛngwɛ́, since she is lɔkɔka, "harmful." (1)

1. See above, Article II, 3.

845 It is apparent from the above description that twins are
189 considered to be somewhat tainted with magic. The existence of
159 this belief is confirmed by the prohibition against throwing anything (stone, palm kernel, etc.) onto their hut, the same prohibition applying to anyone who possesses a charm or practices sorcery or protective magic. In addition they possess a certain innate ability to cast a spell over the activities (hunting, fishing) of others. That is why persons who are afraid of being harmed by them smear themselves with kaolin in the same way as do such children and their parents. [505]

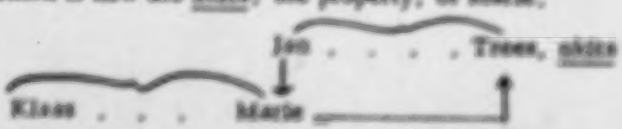
845 The Nkundó have had cases of triplets, but they are extremely rare. The youngest of the three is called Yɛ́ndɔmbɔ, or Yɛ́ndɔndɔ, or Yɛ́lɔlɔ. The only special practice with reference to the youngest one is that he can never be ordered to do any work, be sent to carry a message, run any errand, etc., ɛ́lɔkwɛ́ ɔnɔmɔ.

596 necessary for her father or brother to have brought her to the man and
583 to have received money for her; another member of the family was
56 sufficient. She was sold by her family and accordingly, wherever the money had remained or whoever had received it, she had her rights in the family. Since the family maintained itself through the sale of the children of the female sex, the male children born of them were considered as the masters, the rightful claimants, the fathers. There was no exception to this rule; it was not to be altered, and no one had ever thought of disputing the place of the claimant or of laying claim to his rights. I have only heard of one single case of that sort, namely, at the succession of the Ruki, the younger brother was said to have killed his older brother in order to take over his place. He was said to have made a hole in his brother's pros, so that it sank when it reached the middle of the stream. The matter in itself seems an impossibility; also I consider it a legend, unless an accident might have happened that was interpreted in a mistaken or deliberately false manner.

The rightful claimant, bona wa nkana, sister's son, might
576 still be a child; nevertheless he was called father and everyone vied
57 with one another in showing him the honor due a father. That was the unbreakable law, not only for the father common to the hamlet, bolui, but also for the father of each individual family.

Nkita

583 Nkita is what the woman is called who is bought with the money
602 that the father or brother has received for his daughter or sister on the occasion of her marriage. In reality, however, she is only the nkita, goods or property, of the sold woman. Nkita ekam, "my property," this woman calls her. For instance, Jon [338] sells his daughter, Marie, to Klaas and buys another wife, Trees, with the money received. The latter woman is now the nkita, the property, of Marie.



7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

inches long and two inches in width, numbering up to seven are brought and attached to the back of her *lombo* by folding them over it.[1]

The first male child which was born to the *nkumu* before he acceded to the office is known as *Iyumi Nkisi*. If he has none, then the right to this name passes to the first male child to be born to his younger brothers. Any child born on the day that the *nkumu* is given his *mantolo* is also called *Iyumi*; if a male he will be *Mola Iyumi*, if a female, *Mjumbe Iyumi*.[2] These children must not see the *nkumu* until they are old enough to know his name and greet him properly, and so they are taken to some village other than the one in which he has his residence. When such children are considered old enough to take up residence in the village of the *nkumu* it is an occasion for revelry, a big dance, *mbolo*, is held, and there is a feast. The child, *Iyumi*, is brought to the village of the *nkumu* with rejoicing, and this is a signal for everybody desiring to do so to help himself to anything belonging to the *nkumu*. Goats and fowls may be killed and eaten, sugar-cane rooted up, bananas, plantains, and other crops growing near by seized for food. Because of this custom the *nkumu* will take precautions and send his livestock, at least, off to some other village in order not to lose more than he can help.[3]

The *nyumba*, the singer or singers, and the *mtoti*, the praisers already mentioned, remain with the *nkumu* during his period of seclusion. Added to these is *mtumbo lokumbi*, the bearer of the *lokumbi*, a stringed instrument played with the fingers, similar to a bass viol in its general appearance.

Inside the *ijumu* during the seclusion of the *nkumu*, few people have the right of entrance, but as one enters the *shungu* where the daylight hours are spent, one finds the couch of the *nkumu* on the left and towards the rear. On the same side and towards the front are seated the *mtumbo lokumbi* and the *nyumba*. *Nsumi*'s couch is to the right of, and parallel to, that of the *nkumu*, but still to the left of the centre posts. To the right of her couch is the fire in the centre, and beyond the fire on the right side is a couch for the *nsumi*, likewise somewhat to the rear, with a space in front for the *mtoti*.

The month's seclusion being completed, the *nkumu* prepares to buy the homage of the village. *Nsumi* gets rid of her decorative colours, and assumes ordinary attire, becoming like any other of the wives, and is ready to take up all the usual duties of a wife, whether in the garden or at the house. The people are called to come and render to the *nkumu* their homage and praise. The men come to the *ijumu*, are admitted to the presence of their *nkumu* and seat themselves on the bare earth with their legs wide apart and facing him. They then, without uttering a word, greet him in the

[1] The *lombo* is a belt which used to be worn by Tumba women encircling the buttocks, and this was used to attach their only garments, the *ekwa* among the Bongandu, this being a short bark cloth, or an *ejonga* among other groups, this being a woven cloth only worn between the legs.

[2] When a new *nkumu* assumes office, one already in office will take this opportunity of getting more of his own named *Iyumi*. He often does so on the *mantolo* of the new *nkumu*, and having placed a bracelet of cowrie shells on the right wrist, and sometimes one on the right ankle, asks the number of the *mantolo* whose right it is to give away the *mantolo* to name these sons. *Nkumi* (pl. of '*Iyumi*'). This man will then take such a son, and presenting him to the people introduces him by giving him a name, and following with praise as, '*Ose Iyumi Lomee, hotele!*' and the crowd replies with the customary '*Bwee!*'

[3] It is well to remember that not every individual bearing names associated with the institution of the *nkumu* is directly connected with it. With the practice of '*mwanzanzing*' dead relatives by naming new-born children after them, such names as these become widespread.

624 576 customary manner, with a double clap. They are told by the *nkumu* to repeat the salutation, and having done so may be asked to do it a third time. They are then given a few rods in payment. If the *nkumu* sees some member of his own *ekipo* coming to greet him, he gives him special honour by ordering him to lie flat on his back instead of merely sitting, and at the end he gives him a larger gift of rods than the others receive. In this way the *nkumu* may pay out a great many rods to those who thus render him homage. Ordinarily a man will receive five or six, but one 624 specially honoured may be given as many as twenty. From the beginning the *nkumu* has to pay heavily for his honours, and only a wealthy man can hope to attain them. [556] For this reason a lawful successor, if not wealthy, may be glad to give up his rights to another more fortunate member of the *ekipo*. Homage having been paid, word is sent out that the *nkumu* is about to come forth, and crowds begin to gather. A coat [302] of red camwood powder mixed with oil is smeared over the *nkumu*, the brass plates are attached to his *mantolo*, and he is attired in all his finery. The crowd outside dances, and when tired sits on the ground to await the rest of the ceremony. Inside, [533] the *lokwali* begins to play, the *ejombo* to sing, and the Batwa *atutii* to praise the *nkumu* by uttering an ululating sound. Accompanied by *Ntomo*, *Bilepo*, and the *mawi*, the *nkumu* himself begins to dance. The temporary protecting screen round the *ifumu* is pulled down, and he is seen by all. After his dance he retires again and the crowd disperses.

When *Nkuwa Akuke* becomes *nkumu* he changes everything possible so as to [481] become different from other men. Thus he assumes a different gait, a sort of bow-legged waddle, a different tone of voice, and it seems that under this influence even his facial features undergo a change. Accompanied by his retinue, he visits the various villages where he has friends and relatives in order to greet them. This over, the musicians wish to take their departure and are paid for their services by the *nkumu*.

624 At the conclusion of these ceremonies the *nkumu* with his *ekipo* and the *mokombo* 596 negotiate concerning their obligations to one another. If the *nkumu* is the first of his 621 line, he and his *ekipo* are given land to cultivate, while succeeding *nkumu* simply take over the land originally occupied. The *mokombo* call their *nkumu* their wife, and they designate themselves husband. They thus reckon the relationship between *mokombo* and *ekipo* to be that of husband and wife, and, as in an actual marriage, there must be an interchange of obligations performed in a spirit of harmony. Also, as in marriage a wife may be divorced, so an *nkumu* with his *ekipo* could be sent off to their home and the arrangement terminated. It not infrequently happened that as strangers the *ekipo* fell out with their hosts and if such a disagreement could not be righted they might be refunded the payments with which they had purchased their rights, and went off home.

224 Among the reciprocal obligations of *mokombo* and *ekipo* are included the sharing 624 of certain animals and birds killed in the hunt, among which are the leopard and 621 elephant. All killed, whether male or female, must be divided. Of certain other 596 animals, including the wild pig, antelope, and buffalo, if a female, no portion is given, if a male, the required portion is presented. These reciprocal obligations are limited strictly to the *ekipo* and *mokombo*; if others outside of these groups wish to present the *nkumu* with meat to honour him or to curry favour, they may do so, but they are under

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

must go to the *mankele* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsenge* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsenge* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *mamai*, and all members of the *mokumbe* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nsenge*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally: the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsenge*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *mokumbe*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *mokumbe* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *mokumi o nkumu* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *mantolo* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *nko lwiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *hiongo*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all "free men" clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *mankoki*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *tilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *nakilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *nokuma nsokolo* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight duels, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated "husband" and "wife" respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In former wars "husband" and "wife" were supposed to combine against their successors' foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *tilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the excepta positions which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves.